POLICY DIRECTIONS

A RESPONSE TO THE SULLIVAN ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable Anthony J. Brummet

Minister of Education
Province of British Columbia

Vancouver, British Columbia
January 27, 1989

89-01934/

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RESPONSE TO THE SULLIVAN ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Background

The Sullivan Royal Commission

- The Royal Commission on Education was established by Government in March 1987. Terms of reference to the Commission indicated that Government believed the time had come to evaluate clearly where the province should be headed in education, and the most appropriate and cost-effective means of getting there. The Commission's task was to examine all aspects of the public and independent school system, and to make recommendations that would guide the system into the 21st century. Barry Sullivan, Q.C., was appointed as the Commissioner.

- This is the third Royal Commission on Education established since the beginning of the British Columbia school system over 100 years ago. In Canada, Royal Commissions on Education are generally regarded to be important educational milestones, events that signal a point of departure in our thinking about education and its importance to our lives. These commissions provide an important opportunity for people to express their views and, in doing so, to shape educational policy and the values and priorities we place on learning in our society.

- The Commission travelled widely throughout the Province, visiting communities and schools, and holding public hearings. Over 2000 submissions were received.

- The Commission's report, *A Legacy for Learners*, was released in August, 1988. The report contains 83 recommendations dealing with curriculum, teacher supply and qualifications, system governance, and education finance.

Social and Economic Change

- Major changes have taken place in British Columbia's society and economy over the past 20 years, changes that are placing new demands and expectations on our schools. It has become increasingly clear that our schools have a critical role to play in the growth of human potential in the province and in the development of a healthy society and a prosperous economy.

- The recent explosion in knowledge, coupled with the proliferation of powerful new communication and information processing technologies, has had significant social and economic impact throughout the world. We must begin to ensure that schools provide young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be needed to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

- The restructuring of our economy, from resource-based to a mixed economy with increasing emphasis on the information processing and service sectors, has meant important changes in job and business opportunities for British Columbians. New markets in the Pacific Rim and elsewhere in the world have provided additional challenges and opportunities. As a result, the workplace itself has changed and will continue to change. Not only do workers today need to be creative and adaptive, they require solid grounding in basic literacy skills that will support life-long learning as demands for skills change and as new employment opportunities arise. Creative thinking and the ability to read, write, speak, listen and compute will be essential in order for the worker to be able to access and share knowledge.

- Our society has become much more diverse. An increasing variety of ethnic groups is represented in British Columbia's population, and many different cultural traditions and expectations enrich our social environment. New issues will emerge, but so also will new opportunities. Students must develop an understanding and appreciation of this cultural mosaic and, at the same time, they must learn about the cultural traditions that have shaped Canada's social and political institutions over the years.

- Family structures are changing. The number of single parent families and blended families is on the increase. The role of the school, in light of changing family structures, needs careful definition.

- Related to the changes in family structure are important changes in the role of women in our society. Women have significantly increased their participation in the work force and their representation in traditionally

male-dominated occupations. Both male and female students must learn about the opportunities that they have to pursue careers in areas that interest them.

- The age structure of the population is shifting as well, and older citizens make up an increasing percentage of the population. This new reality has significant implications for the funding of education and social services generally.

Follow-up to the Commission: Review and Consultation

- In accepting the Commission's report, Government committed itself to a thorough review of the recommendations, involving extensive consultation with the major education professional organizations as well as with community organizations. Throughout the fall months, Deputy Minister of Education Sandy Peel chaired meetings of an Education Policy Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of these organizations. The purpose of this committee was to advise the Minister regarding the implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations.

- The Minister of Education, the Honourable Anthony J. Brummet, undertook a tour of the Province to gauge first-hand the reaction of students, parents, teachers, principals, trustees, and the general public to the Commission's recommendations. He visited 35 districts and met with school, school board, and parent groups. The Minister also invited British Columbians to write to him and express their opinions about the Commission's findings, and approximately 500 letters and briefs were received.

- The consultation process demonstrated that there is strong support for the great majority of the Commission's recommendations and for the call to establish a mandate for education. It is clear that the people of the province want Government to set a course for the future.

- After this extensive consultation and review process, and in light of the rapid change which our society and economy have experienced in recent years, Government has decided that the time has come to set clear goals and new directions for the British Columbia school system. In accepting this leadership responsibility, the Government looks forward to working closely with professional and community organizations in the implementation of new policy directions for education.

2. Policy Directions

The following new policy directions for education have been established by Government. Much work remains to be done, and Government is committed to continuing consultation with educators and representatives of the community in order to bring about effective implementation of these new policies. The coming months will be particularly important as implementation details are developed.

1. A mandate for the school system has been developed.

In recent years there has been a growing demand in the province for a clear statement of goals for the education system. A mandate statement has now been developed that will be used to guide the preparation of education policy and legislation.

- The mandate includes the following **mission statement,** which will guide future decision-making about all aspects of the school system:

  The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

- The goals of education are the intellectual, human, social, and career development of students. The system will focus on the preparation of educated citizens, who have the ability to think clearly and critically, and to adapt to change.

- The desirable attributes of the public school system are: accessibility, relevance, equity, quality, and accountability.

- The principles of diversity and choice are presented, and the principle of independent schooling is reaffirmed in the mandate.

- The duties, rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, principals, school boards, district officials, the College of Teachers, the community, the Ministry of Education, other Ministries, and the general public as they pertain to education are outlined in the mandate statement.

2. An Education Advisory Council will be appointed.

There is a need to ensure that directions in provincial education policy and practice remain sensitive to the needs of the community and reflect the best advice of professionals and members of the public.

- To provide on-going advice to the Minister regarding policy directions and their implementation, key professional and community organizations, as well as representatives of various sectors of society, will be asked to participate in the Education Advisory Council that is to be recognized in the *School Act*.

- The Education Advisory Council will carry on and expand the work of the existing Policy Advisory Committee, a committee that was appointed in August 1988 to advise the Minister about the implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations.

3. The Government will prepare a new *School Act*.

The current *School Act* is seriously out of date and is in need of a complete revision.

- In order to provide the legislative framework for the new policy directions, a new *School Act* will be introduced at the spring session of the Legislative Assembly. It is hoped that the new *Act* can be proclaimed by summer.

- The new *Act* will be broadly enabling in nature, to provide for flexibility in the implementation of the new directions.

- The new *School Act* and *Regulation* will be prepared in consultation with the Policy Advisory Committee and other groups and individuals.

4. A new provincial curriculum structure, from the first year of the primary program to Grade 12, will be developed.

Assessment studies over the past ten years indicate that overall student achievement in the basic skill areas is improving, and that B.C. students tend to perform very well when compared to other provinces and other countries. Nevertheless, the Royal Commission points out that about one third of B.C. students drop out of school before graduation, a figure that is similar to that reported in other provinces and jurisdictions. We know that dropouts, unemployment, under-employment, delinquency and illiteracy are all intertwined and exact heavy financial and social costs to the province.

Government believes a new commitment is needed to ensure that the vast majority of students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to function effectively in our changing world. Key to this commitment is a fundamental restructuring of the provincial curriculum with a focus on the development of problem solving and creative thinking skills.

- The new curriculum will be based on the Common Curriculum recommended by the Sullivan Royal Commission, incorporating the four strands of Humanities, Sciences, Practical Arts, and Fine Arts. These strands include the following areas of curriculum:

  Humanities: To include English, Social Studies, French as a Second Language and other languages, and Health/Guidance.

  Sciences: To include Mathematics, Science, Environment, and Technology.

  Practical Arts: To include Physical Education, Industrial Education, Business Education, and Home Economics.

  Fine Arts: To include Music, Visual Arts, Theater, and Dance.

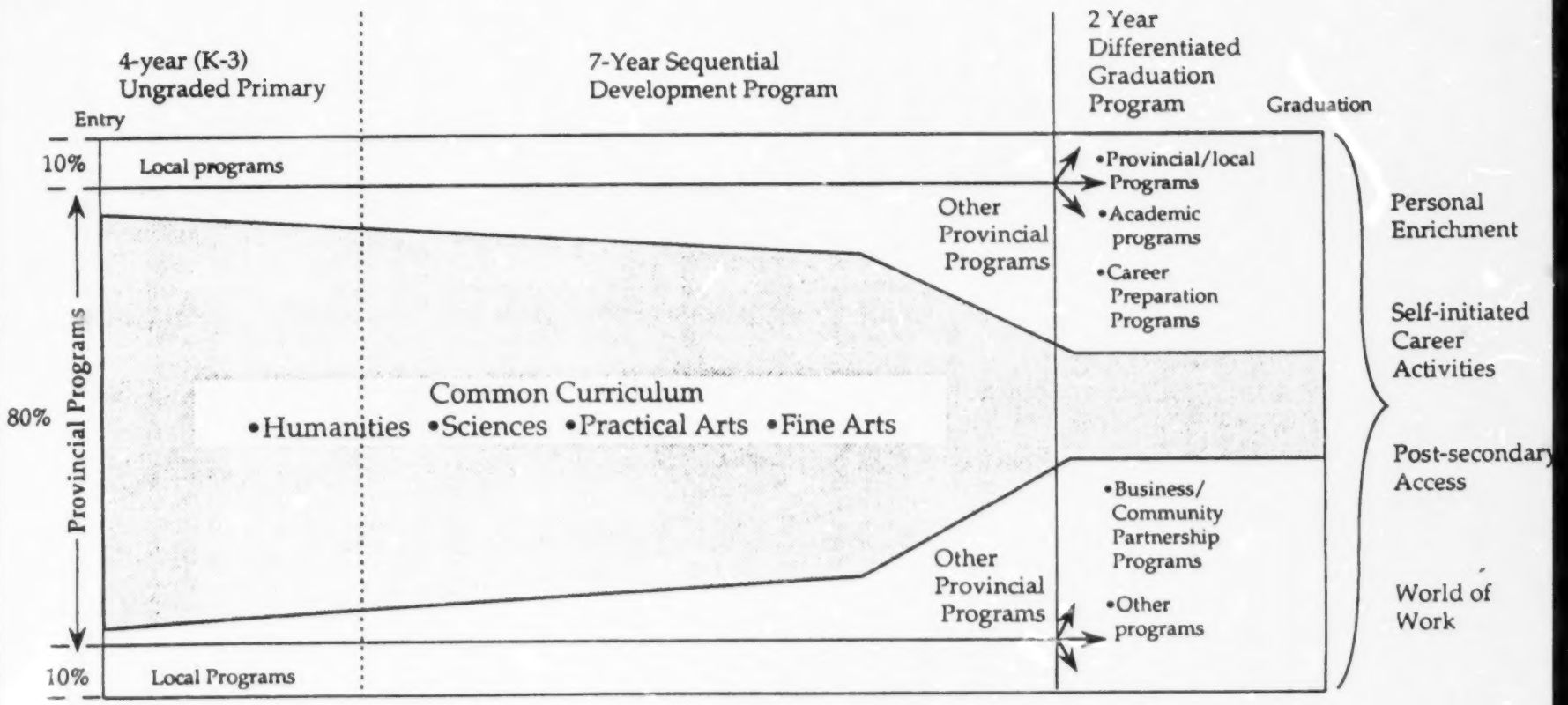
- The curriculum will place much greater emphasis on the individual learner. It will focus on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that learners will need in order to develop their potential and to contribute to society and the economy in the future.

- The provincial curriculum will be designed to require no more than 80% of school instructional time; the remaining 20% will be available for locally developed programs. This structure will allow communities to give emphasis to the study of topics of particular local interest or need.

- Teachers will be encouraged to learn new instructional strategies so that the new curriculum can be taught in an integrated way to diverse groups of students, with increasing emphasis on problem solving and creative thinking skills.

- An in-depth consultation process will be used to develop the details of the new provincial curriculum. A preliminary outline will be completed by September 1989, and the detailed curriculum will be developed by September 1990. An implementation process to phase in the new curriculum will begin with the 1990-91 school year.

Curriculum Structure



5. With the new provincial curriculum, the first four years of school will consist of an ungraded primary program.

It is clear that the early years of school are critical to the subsequent progress of each child. We must ensure that by the end of the primary program all students have achieved a solid grounding in the basic literacy and numeracy skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and computing, as well as growth in other areas such as social skills. Careful instruction and ongoing monitoring, with a focus on the individual child, are essential ingredients of the new government policy directions for the primary years.

- A **dual entry** system will be used to admit children to the first year of the ungraded primary program (formerly Kindergarten). Children whose fifth birthday falls between November 1 and April 30 will enter at the beginning of January, while those whose fifth birthday falls between May 1 and October 31 will enter in September. Parents may defer the entry of children into the program for two entry dates from when they become eligible to start, at which time entry is mandatory. The effect of this dual entry system will be to reduce the spread of ages in a given first year class, and thus make it possible to focus more on individual readiness needs.

- The new dual entry system will be in effect for children entering school in the 1989-90 school year, except that parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls in November or December of 1989 will have the option of registering their child for the first year of the ungraded primary in either September 1989 or January 1990. Children whose fifth birthday falls between January 1, 1990 and April 30, 1990 may be registered for entry to the program in January 1990.

- During the first year of the Primary program, the individual child's developmental needs can be assessed and appropriate program adjustments made. Schools will be encouraged to ensure that all students, upon entry, will experience a minimum of four months of the first-year program, prior to commencing work on the subsequent goals of the primary program. Schools will determine the program for each child based upon the child's needs, local priorities, and the capabilities of the school. Children can move forward at their own pace. Some students may complete the program in less than four years, and some may take longer.

- School districts, with Ministry approval, will be able to provide full day programs for Indian, E.S.L. and special needs children in the first year of the ungraded primary program, rather than half days as with the present Kindergarten.

- For 1989-90, the ungraded primary program will incorporate elements of the present Kindergarten through Grade 3 curricula, which will be reorganized to allow for students' continuous progress to program completion through achievement of knowledge and skill goals. The reorganized Primary program will allow flexible articulation between the present Kindergarten and Grade One programs by extending positive features of the current Kindergarten curriculum into other levels. The Ministry will also develop a new integrated primary curriculum for later implementation.

- New teaching and learning materials will be developed, and additional resources will be made available for implementation of the ungraded primary program. This will include the use of new technologies to provide more attention to the varying abilities of individual children and to assist in the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills and creative thinking.

6. **The curriculum for Grades 4-10 will be organized on the basis of a sequenced set of learning activities leading to gradually higher levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes.**

Following the ungraded primary program, students' further development must be carefully nurtured through a program designed to expand the basic skills and knowledge acquired during the primary years. At the same time, the program must challenge students to develop their ability to think creatively and critically about the world around them.

- As with the ungraded primary program, the curriculum for Grades 4-10 will be based on the four strands of the Common Curriculum recommended by the Sullivan Royal Commission (Humanities, Sciences, Practical Arts, and Fine Arts).

- The curriculum will be learner-focused, and teachers will be encouraged to teach the curriculum in an integrated way, rather than treating each subject separately. There will be increased emphasis on helping students to develop literacy skills, problem-solving and creative thinking skills that are common to all subject areas of the curriculum.

- Government has rejected the Commission's proposal that a Certificate of Entitlement be awarded to students after Grade 10, although it does support the rationale behind Sullivan's recommendation: that greater efforts need to be made to encourage as many students as possible to graduate from secondary school.

7. **New programs at the Grade 11-12 level will provide a choice of pathways leading to graduation.**

The final two years of secondary school should provide each student with a range of program alternatives. Government believes that in order to ensure relevance, these alternatives need to reflect the career aspirations of a full range of students. The school and community need to work together in the design and delivery of these programs.

- The new programs are intended to encourage all students to complete graduation requirements, through participation in programs that meet their particular needs and aspirations.

- Individuals who have left school without graduating will be encouraged to participate in a program leading to graduation.

- Students will be able to earn credit toward graduation through approved programs offered by educational institutions outside of schools and through programs developed in partnership with business and industry. The latter programs will involve a significant work experience component.

- Students will also be able to challenge course completion requirements through a more extensive provincial final examination, without enrolling in the courses.

- Regardless of which program they choose, students completing graduation requirements will be expected to demonstrate their competence in the four areas of the new provincial curriculum (Humanities, Sciences, Practical Arts, and Fine Arts).

8. **The regular Grade 12 provincial examination system will be expanded, and student performance on Grade 12 scholarship examinations will be given greater recognition.**

It is important that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their competence, in comparison to provincial standards, for as many areas as possible of the provincial curriculum which they have studied in their final year of school. Outstanding scholarship must also be recognized more consistently.

- Where they do not now exist, regular provincial examinations will be developed for Grade 12 courses in the Humanities area of the current provincial curriculum. As the new provincial curriculum is developed,

all Grade 12 courses in the Humanities and Sciences areas will have provincial examinations.

- Students will be asked to demonstrate their competence in the other areas of the new provincial curriculum, Practical and Fine Arts, prior to graduation.

- Effective in the 1989-90 school year, provincial examinations will be given a 40% weighting in determining a student's final course mark in examinable Grade 12 courses. This is a reduction from the present system in which provincial examinations are given a 50% weighting. The change reflects a greater emphasis on teachers' assessment of the classroom performance of students in their final year of school.

- Awarding of provincial scholarships will continue to be based on performance on scholarship examinations. To recognize the increasing number of students who receive high scores, the criterion for the award will be based on achievement of a standard, rather than the present system in which scholarships are awarded to only a fixed percentage of top students.

9. There will be increased emphasis on regular assessment of student performance and evaluation of program effectiveness.

Vitally important to the continual improvement of student programs is careful monitoring of how well students are learning in comparison to the intended outcomes of instruction. Current efforts of the system in this regard need to be expanded.

- A variety of new student assessment and program evaluation procedures will be developed for use at the classroom, school, and provincial levels. These procedures will facilitate comparing program results to target levels of performance and provincial standards.

- The current Provincial Learning Assessment Program will be expanded and adjusted to focus on the objectives of the new provincial curriculum.

- As an additional measure of program effectiveness, the Province will continue to take advantage of opportunities to participate with other provinces and countries in comparison studies of student performance.

- To provide relevant information efficiently for purposes of monitoring outcomes at all levels of the school system, a new student data collection and processing system will be implemented in cooperation with districts and schools.

10. Accountability and reporting procedures at all levels of the system will be improved.

Students need to be informed about their strengths as well as about areas that require further work. Parents, the local community and the general public expect, and have a right to receive, information about the operation of the system on a regular basis and in an understandable form. The strengths of the current reporting procedures need to be developed further.

- Students will be provided with continuous feedback from teachers about the skills they have mastered and about those that require further development.

- Parents will receive frequent and clearly understandable reports from schools on student progress and competence.

- The community will be provided with annual reports from the school board on the performance of schools in the district, in relation to provincial and district objectives and standards. The reports will reference key education indicators, based on information provided by the Ministry.

- The Legislative Assembly and the people of the Province will receive annual reports from the Ministry showing the progress made toward achieving the goals of education and the desired attributes, as outlined in the mandate for the system.

11. The teaching profession is recognized as being fundamental to the operation of a quality school system.

The professional commitment of teachers to a high quality learning environment for students provides the foundation for the success of the school system. As the Royal Commission noted, the relationship between teachers, children and parents is the most important and critical one in education.

- To help enhance the status of teaching as a profession, the Ministry will undertake a campaign to more clearly inform the public about the positive results achieved by schools.

- The Ministry will implement a new program of annual Provincial Teaching Excellence Awards. Awards will be made to outstanding public and independent school teachers, and each individual teacher may use the award funds for the professional development activity of the recipient's choice.

- The right and responsibility of teachers, as a professional group, to direct and control their own professional development has been recognized in the *Teaching Profession Act*. Further discussions will be held with the College of Teachers, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, and other interested groups to clarify the role of these organizations with respect to the individual professional development of teachers.

- With regard to new curricula, evaluation procedures, staff development and school improvement, the Ministry will continue to provide organizational leadership and will provide increased support for system implementation training, in consultation with the Education Advisory Council and in partnership with school boards.

12. Existing teacher education programs will be expanded, and new programs to increase the supply of teachers in rural areas will be implemented.

It is very important that highly motivated and qualified individuals continue to be attracted to the teaching profession. Increasing the supply of teachers wherever there are shortages in the province is a high priority.

- Increased funding will be provided to universities so that more qualified applicants for teacher education programs can be admitted and the supply of new teachers increased.

- A new forgivable loan program will be implemented to encourage individuals to teach in rural areas following completion of a teacher education program. For each year of teaching in designated areas of the province, 1/10 of the loan will be forgiven.

- A further measure to increase teacher supply in rural areas will be the creation of a Rural Teacher Education Program fund. Consortia of universities, colleges and school districts will be invited to apply for funding to initiate and operate teacher education programs in rural areas.

13. The College of Teachers will be asked to review the qualifications required for admission to the teaching profession and for continuing certification.

In view of the increasing expertise that is being expected of teachers, the content of teacher education programs should be reviewed. Similarly, the question of certificate renewal should be examined.

- The College of Teachers will be requested to consider whether increasing teacher education programs to five years in length, as recommended by the Royal Commission, will substantially improve teacher qualifications and thereby improve student performance.

- The College of Teachers will be asked to consider whether teacher education programs should include extended periods of practice teaching, a broadened background in Arts and Sciences, multicultural awareness training, gender equity training, native education training, and special education training for all teachers as prerequisites to certification.

- The College will also be asked to determine whether teachers should be required to renew their certification after a fixed period of time.

- The College of Teachers will be asked to work with the Ministry of Education and with representatives of the Federation of Independent Schools Association to agree on standards and procedures for certifying independent school teachers.

14. Some independent schools will receive increased support.

To encourage choice and diversity, independent schools should be supported. At the same time, all schools should meet certain basic requirements.

- As a matter of public accountability, all independent schools will be required to register with the Ministry of Education, and to provide statistical and other operational data to the Ministry.

- Independent schools will continue to have access to all authorized provincial learning resources.

- New categories for independent schools will be established.

Funded Schools:

Group 1:

Will use curriculum consistent with the goals of the provincial common curriculum; participate in regular provincial assessment and examination programs and evaluated for accreditation; at least half of students enrolled are the children of Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who are permanent residents of British Columbia; all teachers certified; may offer Dogwood graduation certificate (subject to regulations); must not teach, practice or advocate racial discrimination, religious intolerance or sedition; will be funded at 50% level as long as the average per-pupil school operating cost does not exceed the per-pupil operating cost of the local school district; may claim to be "B.C. Government Certified".

Group 2:

As with Group 1, except funded at 35% funding because the school's per pupil school operating costs exceed the per pupil operating cost of the public school district.

Group 3:

Funded at 10% level; at least half of students enrolled are the children of Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who are permanent residents of British Columbia; not obligated to use curriculum consistent with the provincial curriculum common goals; must have an adequate facility; no participation in provincial assessments or examinations; must not teach, practice or advocate racial discrimination, religious intolerance or sedition; teachers need not be certified; may only claim "Registered (Not Certified) with Government of B.C."

Non-funded:

Group 4:

Not funded; no percentage of B.C. students required; evaluated for B.C. certification; curriculum used must be consistent with the provincial common curriculum goals; school pays for evaluation costs; school must be bonded; 80% of teachers must be certified; may not offer the Dogwood graduation certificate; participates in provincial assessment and examinations; must not teach, practice or advocate racial

discrimination, religious intolerance or sedition; may claim to be "B.C. Government Certified".

Group 5:

Not funded; not obligated to use curriculum consistent with provincial curriculum goals; does not participate in provincial assessment and examination programs; facility must meet local fire, health and zoning codes; teachers do not have to be certified; at least half of students enrolled are the children of Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who are permanent residents of British Columbia; may not offer the Dogwood graduation certificate; must not teach, practice or advocate racial discrimination, religious intolerance or sedition; may only claim "Registered (Not Certified) with Government of B.C."

15. Home Schooling is recognized.

For a considerable period of time, home schooling of one's own children has been a practice chosen by a small number of parents. Government has decided that the status of home schooling should be clarified.

- To ensure that every child's educational welfare is protected, parents will be required to register home schooled students with a public school, funded independent school or regional correspondence school. Under the new *School Act*, anyone with grounds to believe that a child is not registered, and that the educational welfare of the child is at risk, may report the situation to the Ministry of Social Services and Housing.

- Home schooled students and their parents will be offered, but not required to use, educational services including evaluation, assessment, authorized textbooks and learning materials, consultation and record keeping.

- Public schools will receive funding for each registered home schooled student equivalent to one quarter of a full-time student, to assist with provision of services. Funded independent schools that register home schooled students will receive 0.25 of their qualifying per pupil grant.

16. Increased support will be given to Indian education.

Government agrees with the Royal Commission that there is a need to work with Indian bands and councils in order to ensure that First Nations children retain and preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage. Other children must also become aware of First Nations' history and cultural heritage.

- Policies will be developed to increase the participation of Indian communities in decision-making about education for Indian learners, and to assist in the preservation of Indian language and culture through school programs.

- The Ministry's Indian Education Advisory Committee, in consultation with the First Nations Education Secretariat and the Provincial Education Advisory Council, will develop a long-term action plan for Indian education. Special attention will be paid to developing programs to improve the graduation rate and post-secondary participation of Indian learners.

- Indian bands may enter into agreements with school districts regarding the programs for Indian learners which are funded through the Ministry's regular funding system. Bands which enter into such agreements will be provided with additional special grants for the development of language and culture programs.

- The Ministry will provide increased funding to districts through the funding system for the provision of special education services to Indian students.

- The Ministry will develop new programs to increase the awareness of <u>all</u> students about First Nations history and culture.

17. The system of separate school districts will continue, and greater involvement of parents at the school and district levels will be encouraged.

School Boards provide the best way to ensure both accountability at the local level, and community input to educational decision-making. School boards should ensure that all schools in their districts provide meaningful opportunities for parents to help set directions for the school.

- School board elections will continue to be held every three years. The Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Ministry of the Attorney General, will develop new conflict of interest rules for persons serving on school boards.

- School boards will be encouraged to establish parent and community advisory committees at the district and school level. The responsibilities of boards for these committees will be outlined in the new *School Act*.

- Additional funding will be provided for implementation training, particularly for remote areas, to increase understanding by trustees, district administrators and school administrators of the directions of provincial initiatives and programs.

18. Government is committed to ensuring that services to children, including children with special needs, are delivered in an efficient and coordinated manner.

Non-instructional support services must be provided so that all children can take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by schools.

- The Ministries of Education, Social Services and Housing, Health, and the Solicitor General will develop protocols consistent with the mandate and responsibility of each Ministry, which describe processes for the provision of services to children.

- These Ministries will ensure that their representatives at the local and regional level work cooperatively in the delivery of support services to children.

- New or expanded programs will be developed by the Ministry of Health in assisting schools with the diagnosis and treatment of children with serious learning difficulties. The Ministry of Social Services and Housing will also expand its rehabilitation services for children with behavioural difficulties. The school will continue to play a coordinating role in the provision of school-based services.

- The Ministry of Education will provide additional resources for assisting handicapped children in classrooms. In addition, the Ministry will provide additional resources for the diagnosis of learning difficulties in the primary years.

- The system's responsibility to provide services to special needs students will be outlined in the new *School Act*.

19. The principle of gender equity will be reinforced throughout the curriculum and schools.

The changing role of women in society must be reflected in the curriculum and in the operation of the school system.

- The Ministry will continue to review prospective learning materials for gender bias. There will be increased emphasis placed on enhancing student awareness of gender issues through the new provincial curriculum and teaching materials.

- Counsellors and classroom teachers will be assisted to provide information to students about non-traditional career opportunities for both women and men.

- School boards will be encouraged to increase the ratio of female to male counsellors in the schools, so that communication with female students about career options can be improved.

- All levels of the system will be asked to review their hiring and promotion practices to ensure that they are free from gender bias and are equitable for all.

- The Ministry will monitor and report data annually on gender-related issues such as enrollment of female students in mathematics and science courses, and percentages of female counsellors and administrators.

20. The multicultural nature of British Columbia society will be recognized through education policy and programs.

It is important that all students develop an appreciation for the variety of cultural groups that enrich our society at the same time as they are learning about the historical foundations upon which our society is based.

- A provincial multicultural education policy will be established in consultation with the Education Advisory Council and representatives of the multicultural community. School boards will be encouraged to establish multicultural education policies at the district level.

- The Ministry will continue to review prospective teaching materials for racial or cultural bias. Increased emphasis will be placed on enhancing student understanding of the multicultural nature, as well as the historical foundations, of our society through the new provincial curriculum and teaching materials.

- Information about exemplary district multicultural education and race relations programs will be circulated to all districts.

- The Ministry will establish heritage language pilot projects in selected school districts throughout the Province.

- The Ministry will seek increased funding for English as a Second Language programs from the federal government.

- All levels of the system will be asked to review their hiring and promotion practices to ensure they are free from ethnic or racial bias.

21. Government will undertake a complete review of the funding system for education in the Province.

As the Royal Commission stated, the school system requires adequacy and stability of funding in order to carry out its mandate. Predictable funding allows long-range planning for the efficient operation of the system.

- The current funding system is to remain in place until the 1990-91 fiscal year. Over the coming year the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance will examine the funding system to ensure that it is fair and equitable and that it is consistent with funding for colleges and universities.

22. Government will implement a major capital funding program for the school system.

Adequate physical facilities are fundamental to the provision of a quality education program. Construction and renovation work must reflect the changing requirements of the learning environment.

- To keep pace with growing enrollments, the Ministry will allocate new funds for the expansion of existing schools or for construction of new school facilities throughout the Province.

- A number of schools throughout the Province, which were constructed in the 1940s and 1950s, need to be renovated in order to protect the original investment and to meet current needs. The Ministry will allocate funding for this purpose, as part of the long-term capital funding program.

23. Government is committed to the principle of fair and equitable taxation for financing the school system.

Raising revenue for the school system is a complex issue. In addressing this issue, we must ensure that we also make progress toward the goal of equity of tax burden.

- For the 1989-90 fiscal year, the present residential property tax system will be maintained, including the Homeowner Grant Program.

- The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance will review the taxation system. Any improvements to the taxation system will be ready for the 1990-91 fiscal year.

3. Funding and Implementation

Funding:

- Government plans to spend an additional $1.4 billion over the next ten years for implementation of education policies.

- A further $1.5 billion will be spent over the next six years to build new schools and upgrade buildings, an amount that more than doubles what is currently spent on school capital programs.

Implementation Timeline - Key Dates:

January, 1989

Implementation planning begins in consultation with the Policy Advisory Committee.

Spring, 1989

New *School Act* developed.

September, 1989

Outline for new provincial curriculum completed.

Dual entry system for new ungraded primary program comes into effect.

Planning for new assessment and examination procedures completed.

New funding system for independent schools in place.

Special grant program for Indian language and culture programs in place.

1989 - 1999

Implementation of new policies.